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## AGRICULTURE, MINING, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES

ADAMS, FREDERICK UPHAM. *The Conquest of the Tropics*. Pp. xii, 368. Price, \$2.00. Garden City: Doubleday, Page and Company.

If some experienced writer should go to the Standard Oil Company, get from it a collection of facts about its development and the life history of its founders, he could make a very interesting story of the development of the oil industry and the great economic services it has rendered.

Doubtless, certain ethical, legal, political and social matters of common knowledge and great interest would be omitted from the narrative.

Keeping the above facts in mind, one interested in the development of the tropics, of the banana industry, or in mere stories of achievement, will find much interesting reading in Mr. Adams' "Conquest of the Tropics" which is nothing more than the history of the United Fruit Company, its enterprises and founders, from data furnished chiefly by themselves. Mr. Adams doesn't emphasize the fact that it is often called the "Banana Trust" but he does lay stress on the point that the enterprisers needed great rewards for the risks they ran.

When one starts out to judge this company as a social or political phenomenon he should remember that the comparison should be made not with the absolute, whatever that may be, but with what would otherwise have prevailed. The United Fruit Company's political and economic achievement in the lands of a dozen Diazes and Carranzas and Villas is a commanding achievement as a type of the tropic industry of the future. It needs to be studied and Mr. Adams has given us some very interesting material with which to start.

It is suggestive to see how these Yankee enterprisers sent to the Orient for scientists and physicians, how they started an American university to studying tropic diseases, how they were the pioneer sanitarians of the American Tropics and how their costly researches at sugar making in Cuba promise to supply the world with cane fiber paper and spare our forests a heavy drain. An enterprise that employs 60,000 men in a dozen different countries might be classed as one of the Powers. In the lands along the Carribean it is more than that in the opinion of some travellers. This book shows the economic basis of that power.

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HARRIS, FRANKLIN S. and STEWART, GEORGE. *The Principles of Agronomy*. Pp. xvi, 451. Price, \$1.40. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1915.

The purpose of the book as laid down in the introduction, is to "give the beginner in agricultural study a general idea of the successful production of crops and to furnish him a basis of study in other branches of agriculture."

Dr. Harris and Mr. Stewart have divided their material under the four main headings—the plant, the soil, the field crops, and field management.

Under the first heading, there is a general discussion of the plant and its environment, including the factors of growth. Then there follows a rather detailed description of plant structure setting forth the use of each of the parts described, and a description of the various plant functions. With these factors

brought out, there comes a chapter drawing a rather happy analogy between the plant and the factory, showing how the plant manufactures the three chief elements of the food of men and the lower animals, viz., proteids, carbohydrates and fats.

The next section deals with soil. The origin and formation of soils are taken up, including a description of the rocks from which soils are made and the different types of formative agents. The physical properties of the soil are considered, and a rather detailed analysis of the methods of the control of water is given, particular emphasis being laid on irrigation and dry farming. The plant food of the soil, soil bacteria, manures and fertilizers, and tillage and crop rotation each receive a share of attention. The last chapter is given over to a discussion of special problems such as erosion, acidity, etc., and methods of dealing with each problem are recommended.

Crops is the title of the third main division. Wheat, corn and other cereals such as barley, rye and oats, and their varieties are described, and some time is devoted to the methods of planting, the factors of production, the care of the crop and something of the climatic requirements of each. Root crops, grasses, sorghum and millets, the fibrous crops are treated separately, and various other crops are mentioned. The general plan of discussion for the latter groups is the same as for the cereals.

Under the caption of Field Management, the amount of planning, the kind of crops to grow and farm equipment are each taken up in turn. The book closes with a brief summing up of the factors that go to make for crop success, making the customary suggestions which are undeniably good but so seldom followed.

This work lays down an excellent foundation for a high school course or even, perhaps, for an elementary first-year course in college. Excellent supplementary readings are suggested at the end of each chapter. Furthermore, parts of the book such as the chapter on specific soil problems and the recommendations in regard to them, the section on dry farming and irrigation, have a practical every-day value.

As a piece of literature the book is open to some criticism. In a great many places there is a lack of balance. For example, Chapter 10, part II, on the control of soil water, covers some twenty pages, while the discussion of plant food of the soil, seemingly of equal importance, is accorded but six. Again, it might perhaps be better to lay more stress on climatic conditions required for the growth of various crops, giving more specific illustrations.

The arrangement, too, while excellent in the main, is not ideal. The need of the chapter entitled, What Soil Is is not entirely clear. The chapter devoted to potatoes precedes the one on root crops, and as a result there is some confusion as to whether the potato is to be classified as a root crop or not. Again, a discussion of pastures, meadows and soiling systems (24, part III) is put between the chapter on grasses and that on sorghum and millets. A discussion of pastures might well follow grasses, but in that case, by putting these two last, the matter would be clarified in the mind of the reader,

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